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ABSTRACT

By looking at the history and current status of two-year college alumni programs, one can better anticipate and plan for their future. The development of alumni programs at public community and junior colleges has been a recent phenomenon about which there is no repository of information. Within the State University of New York system, 20 of the 30 community colleges have active alumni associations, with 4 of these being particularly successful. In North Carolina, the president of the Department of State Community Colleges is currently supporting a statewide effort to encourage the state's 58 community colleges to develop their alumni organizations. Although such statewide efforts are limited, many states boast very successful programs at individual colleges. On the whole, however, two-year college alumni programs have not been spectacular. Some assume that two-year college graduates have not been in the work force long enough to be able to give financial support to their institution, or that two-year college students who transfer give their support to the four-year institution from which they graduated. Though there is little evidence to support these assumptions, until recently community colleges have not made a substantial commitment to alumni programs. Furthering this commitment will require: (1) top-level administrative support for alumni program development; (2) the development of a body of information about existing two-year college alumni programs; (3) a thorough knowledge of the principles of alumni development that have been used successfully at four-year colleges and how they can be adapated for use at two-year colleges; (4) the establishment of goals for alumni programs that are appropriate to the individual schools; and (5) the investigation of various ways of using alumni networks in fund raising and other forms of institutional support. (LAL)

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TWO-YEAR COLLEGE ALUMNI PROGRAMS INTO THE 1990'S

Opening Address of the
National Workshop on Two-Year College Alumni Programs
Sponsored by the Junior and Community College Institute
1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. - Suite 1013
Washington, D.C. 20009

June 26 and 27, 1986

Address Given by

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Presented at the 3rd Annual Conference of the
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to address the broad picture of alumni program development at two-year colleges. It s title is "Two-Year College Alumni Programs into the 1990's." However, before one talks about what might be the picture of two-year college alumni programs in the 1990's, it is important to first look at the history and current status of of two-year college alumni programs. By looking here can one can better anticipate and plan for the future.

RESEARCH AND THE STATUS OF ALUMNI PROGRAMS AT TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

The first organized alumni program is said to have begun in the U.S. at Williams College in 1821. Because there is little literature available about the subject of alumni programs at two-year colleges, I cannot tell you when the first alumni program was begun at a two-year college. I would assume, however, that the first two-year college alumni effort began at one of this country's private junior colleges. The development of alumni programs at public community and junior colleges has, of course, been a more recent phenomenon since many of these colleges began only in the past 70 or so years.

In preparation for this article I have researched the subject of alumni programs at two-year colleges. The subject is a very elusive one. There is no repository of information about alumni programs at two-year colleges and indeed there has been no major survey or research about the subject. The Junior and Community College Institute hopes to correct this situation in the near future by conducting a survey to determine the status of alumni programs. The Institute will conduct this survey in conjunction with Mr. Richard Witter and in cooperation with Dr. Louis Bender at Florida State University's Institute for Higher Education. In the meantime, research has taken the form of reading what had been written on the subject, gathering information about alumni programs, and informal contacts with colleagues in the field.

Let me share with you some of this research.
In 1986 the State University of New York's (SUNY) Coordinator of Alumni Affairs prepared a report of observations based on the experience encountered at the 30 community colleges within the SUNY system. He found that 4 campuses are moving forward very nicely in developing their alumni programs. There are an additional 16 active alumni associations in other community colleges which are described as less successful than these 4.

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There were several significant observations of this report. One was that "long-term objectives are the only objectives that are successful." Another was that "most colleges and universities fall short in their attempts to establish appropriate goals for alumni programs."

Another important topic of the report was the "discordant relationship between alumni and development." One quoted in the report describes this relationship as "universal" in higher education. He calls for creativity in bridging the gap between alumni and development. At the same time, he notes it is important to look to alumni for all types of assistance. He speaks to the need to get alumni involved in things other than development well before any broad fund-raising and development efforts are undertaken.

This approach to working with alumni corresponds with the 3-W approach to working with volunteers advocated by George A. Brakeley, Jr. in his book Tested Ways to Successful Fund-Raising. Brakeley speaks of seeing volunteers for their WISDOM, WORK and WEALTH. While wealth should, of course, not be ignored, neither should it be the first priority. Indeed Brakeley suggests that it be the last.

Today in the state of North Carolina, its former governor and current President of the Department of Community Colleges is actively supporting a state-wide effort to encourage the 58 public two-year colleges in North Carolina to develop their alumni organizations. To my knowledge, such state-wide efforts are limited. The North Carolina state-wide effort is in contrast to what occurred in the state in 1977. At that time, there was little alumni activity at two-year colleges. Indeed, the author of a small study of alumni associations concluded that spending significant time and effort to develop alumni programs might not be in the college's best interest.

In the state of California, one successful alumni program operates on what I would call the student services model. That is that the alumni organization is housed in and operates closely with the College's Student Services Office. This alumni organization cooperates very well with the college's foundation and institutional advancement efforts. An important philosophy of this program is that a successful alumni association needs to involve students in college activities and thus encourage them to continue this involvement once they leave the college.

In the state of Missouri, a large multi-campus institution's alumni association board works in tandem with the College's foundation board. This operation of an alumni association, used in many other states as well, I would say is based on an institutional advancement/development model.

In each of the last two examples, a very important element of success is the cooperation between alumni programming and institutional advancement in spite of the fact that the colleges have established their programs is different ways.

In South Carolina, 5 of 9 respondents to a survey of 16 state technical colleges reported having alumni associations, another 3 are planning to develop one. Only 2 of these alumni associations are currently active in fund-raising activities on behalf of the college.

Of interest is the fact that the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges has in the last 4 years honored at its annual convention alumni of two-year colleges. They've honored such notables as the billionnaire philanthropist, H. Ross Perot, the Pulitzer prize-winning photographer of the Chicago Sun Times, John White, and the California Angels pitcher, Don Sutton, who recently achieved the significant milestone of having 300 victories in his career as a major league pitcher.

Another development of interest is the fact that the Association of Community College Trustees published for two years a newsletter "Foundation/Alumni ADVOCATE."

Now that I have presented some information about the status of two-year college alumni programs, let me address some of the assumptions which have driven the development - or lack thereof - of alumni programs at two-year colleges.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGE ALUMNI PROGRAMS

In the book Advancing the Two-Year College published in 1982 by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, little attention is paid to the subject of alumni programs. In a discussion of why two-year public college alumni fund-raising efforts have not been "spectacular" one author states

1. Community colleges are relatively new and their graduates have not been in the work force for a sufficient time.

2. Alumni who transfer tend to support the four-year institution.

3. Community colleges have not made a commitment.

I believe these statements apply to aspects of alumni program development other than fund-raising. And, if I may use editorial license, I would also say they represent some assumptions about two-year college alumni program development.

Let me respond to each of these statements.

Item 1 - True, community colleges are a relatively new phenomenon. Many began in the boom years of the mid to late sixties. However, many are older than that. The city Colleges of Chicago began in 1911. And, many colleges in Mississippi and California began in the 1920's.

Even when speaking of the most recent history of community colleges, it's former students have been in the work force for at least twenty years. To say that alumni have not been in the workforce for a sufficient time may have been true in the mid-70's for colleges begun in the 60's but it is a valid one today. It is even less true, of course, for those Colleges begun in the teens and 20's of this century.

Indeed, many of those who attended two-year colleges in the 60's would now be in the 35 to 40 year range. They are now moving to their peak earning years. They have moved beyond the age of 35 when, according to a recent Independent Sector report of "The Charitable Behavior of Americans" they give more to charity than those below that age. Students who graduated before the '60's would of course be older - in the 50 to 70 year range - the time for peak contributions.

Beyond their increased ability to give, former students can contribute greatly to a college's career counseling and job placement programs. At their increased age, they likely hold positions of increased authority in business and industry. They can help with job placement and cooperative education. They can help students learn about careers, and they can be involved in the many, many new "mentoring" and "shadowing" programs at colleges.

Further, alumni in the work force are very good candidates to serve on curriculum advisory committees. Their expertise in various disciplines should be welcomed. Alumni can also be important assets to college's government relations and legislative efforts.

The Independent Sector report shows that most Americans think charitable giving is an important responsibility. It also points out that two out of five say they neither contribute enough money nor volunteer enough time. Many said they would increase the amount of money they give to charitable organizations and causes <u>if they were asked to do so</u>.

Another important factor to consider in this discussion about volunteer effort and fund-raising is the fact that once people begin to support an organization they continue to keep that organization on their giving list. Colleges need to get their alumni and former students involved in their work. If they do not some other organization likely will.

Item 2 - With respect to the assumption that students who transfer

tend to support the four-year institution, I ask "How do we know this?" True, in the history of two-year college education, there has been some emphasis on transfer programs - we had junior colleges. And, the two-year public college system built in the 1960's may have begun with this "transfer philosophy" in mind. Even so, I still ask the question "How do we know two-year college graduates transfer their loyalty and allegiance to a four-year college?"

Another important point related to this assumption is that there are millions of two-year college graduates - approximately 4 million associate degrees have been conferred just since 1976. I cannot tell you how many of these students go on to further education. I ask, however, an additional question "Have not these 4 million students benefitted from the two-year college?" Two-year colleges have provided many of these individuals with a first-chance at education. If two-year college personnel really believe they have provided a service to these students, they should not hesitate to think those who have benefitted from this service would appreciate the experience.

So far in this discussion I have not even raised the question of students who do not graduate. As we know, many students who have attended two-year colleges have done so for continuing education. They never intended to complete a degree. They have, however, benefitted from the college.

Many two-year colleges are community based. Those who have gone to and/or graduated from these colleges remain in the location where they have gone to college. They have a strong interest in the community in which they live and the education and training of its citizens.

The assumption that allegiance is transferred to a four-year college is one I find hard to accept.

Item 3 With respect to the statement that community colleges have not made a commitment to alumni programs, I would say that heretofore this has been true. I see, however, through my research and discussions with two-year college personnel that if there is not yet a serious commitment throughout the two-year college community, there is certainly interest in the subject of alumni programs. Indeed, there are places where there is a big commitment on the part of college presidents to the development of alumni programs.

The fact that forty representatives of two-year colleges are participating in this "National Workshop on Two-Year College Alumni." The fact that fifty-three individuals attended a recent conference at Burlington County College on the subject of alumni programs. And, the fact that nearly seventy persons participated in the College of DuPage's 1982 Alumni Association Conference are

indications to me of some commitment to developing alumni programs. The total number of persons participating in these conferences would be approximately 150 to 170 persons. This represents close to 10 per cent of the total number of two-year colleges in the country.

Given this increased commitment to alumni program development, let us look at what the picture may be in the next ten years.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

As I've presented in my discussion of assumptions which have driven two-year college alumni program development, I am not certain that the assumptions that have been prevalent within the two-year college community apply to alumni program development today. Nor do I believe alumni program development is something just for four-year institutions.

Four-year colleges have had alumni programs for many years. These colleges would not have been in the business of alumni college development for the last 150 years if they hadn't found benefit from such development. Two-year institutions now see similar benefit from developing alumni programs. By 1995, I believe there will be many, many more two-year college alumni programs.

Two-year colleges differ from four-year institutions and the method of developing alumni programs at two-year colleges may also differ. Some of the operating principles for alumni development for four-year colleges - such things as athletic clubs, support to sororities or classes, and the camraderie established in a residential setting - are things which may not be successful at some two-year colleges. Alumni groupings at two-year colleges are frequently based on discipline and programs rather than by class. The fact that many community colleges are just that, community based, also is something different from the four-year college's residential situation. In 1995, two-year college alumni programs will likely be organized differently from those at four-year colleges.

An important step for community and junior colleges in the next few years is to show college administrators the importance of support for alumni program development. Presidential support for such an effort is crucial to the success of alumni programs. Research shows that without this commitment on the part of college presidents, the chances of the necessary long-term success of alumni programs is diminished. College presidents need to understand that alumni program development is such a long-term investment. Without such top level administrative support, the alumni programs in the 1990's will likely not be successful.

In order to convince college administrators and people in the community college movement about the importance of alumni

programs, we must know more about existing two-year college alumni programs. We must know what's being done, and what's been successful. How are colleges' using alumni in various aspects of college development? How are they helping with career development, curriculum improvement, legislative relations, and fund-raising?

Another important thing to know is the principles of alumni development which have been successfully employed at four-year colleges. Two-year colleges can adapt some of these principles of alumni development to their own work. By the year 1995, much more will be know about two-year college alumni programs and the similarities and differences between them and four-year institutions.

The picture of two-year college alumni programs in the 1990's will be a varied one. Community colleges represent several unique types of institutions. There are multi-campus urban institutions, and large and small rural institutions. There are colleges organized into state systems, and there are those funded by individual counties or by a combination of state, county and local jurisdictions. There are liberal arts schools, comprehensive community colleges and technical institutes and colleges. Alumni programs at these colleges may vary but the principles of alumni development at them will likely be the same.

Establishing alumni programs is not an end unto itself. These alumni programs are a means to an end. Each college must determine what that end should be. The goals of an alumni program will vary depending upon the institution and the length of time the institution has had an alumni program. Some schools may need alumni support in working with area business and industry. Others may need support in working with students. Still others may need support to influence state legislators to adequately support community colleges.

Indeed, in the state of Michigan today, where Governor Blanchard recently vetoed an increase in community college budgets, the community college leadership might be very happy to have the support of the many alumni who have attended that state's 35 two-year colleges. And, in the state of New York the fact that an alumnus of Dutchess Community College's evening division is Chair of the County Board of Representatives may bode well for the community college. In New York state this Board has the greatest legal authority over budgets and operations of local community colleges.

Clearly, alumni can provide necessary leadership and volunteer support to colleges' development and legislative efforts. In the 1990's, two-year college alumni will hopefully be better organized to provide such support.

A recent U.S. Department of Education Center for Statistics' report, shows that for 1983-84 two-year public colleges received just 11% of their revenues from private gifts and grants, endowment income, and income from auxiliary enterprises and independent operations. This is compared to an average of 26.7% for such revenues at all other types of institutions of higher education. In the private sector, two-year college revenues from these sources represented 28.8% of total revenues. This compared to 43% of revenues for other institutions.

Many two-year colleges have only recently become involved with private fund-raising efforts. As these data show, colleges have a ways to go to be on par with other institutions.

Developing strong alumni networks should enhance fund raising instruments such as the annual fund-drive. This fund-raising instrument relies on continuous broad-based support. These networks should also be important bases for periodic capital campaigns. Several public community colleges have recently undertaken capital campaigns. In the 1990's many more two-year colleges will likely have annual campaigns. I believe the number of capital campaigns will also increase as college facilities require needed attention.

A term often used concerning annual campaigns is "living endowments". It represents the concept that money contributed each year by supporters of an organization is in place of the income generated by an organization's endowment should that organization have an endowment. An example is that the $100,000 raised by an organization's annual fund drive is in place of the same amount that would be available if the organization had a $1 million endowment producing income at a rate of ten per cent per year.

As we know, the relatively new junior and community colleges of this country do not have the significant endowments other institutions of higher education can claim. Until two-year colleges establish and build their endowment programs, I suggest that two-year college alumni may be some of these colleges' most significant living endowments.

The American Alumni Council's specific directions for emerging alumni programs are that colleges need to: 1) identify alumni; 2) interest them; 3) involve them; and finally; 4) move them to invest in the college. Two-year colleges would be wise to follow these directives as they establish their alumni programs and cultivate one of their most valuable resources - their alumni.

There is much more to be learned and reported about alumni programs at two-year colleges. In the future, we will learn more about alumni program development in the field. We will learn more about the successes and failures of some programs. We will also

be better able to anticipate and plan for the future of these programs. Many two-year college personnel are now interested and involved in the two-year college alumni movement. Its future is not yet known. I believe it's an exciting time to be involved in this nascent development.

Let me end this article by mentioning Alex de Toqueville, who noted in his book Democracy in America, that one of this country's unique strengths is its ability to get things done and a facility for organization at all levels. I believe the concept of alumni development is one de Toqueville would say contributes to the country's strength.

CASE

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"Two-Year College Alumni Programs into the 1990's"
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Directed to all professional levels

As Managing Partner of The Junior and Community College Institute, Ms. Kerns has consulted with over sixty post-secondary institutions in the areas of public and private fund-raising, program planning and evaluation, proposal development, and institutional planning. Ms. Kerns gave the Opening Address at the Institute's June 1986, "National Workshop on Two-Year College Alumni." She has done research on the subject of two-year college alumni. She has also consulted with several college foundations and alumni organizations.

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